



MARDI HARGREAVES

# LUTETIUM

Element Symbol: **Lu**

Atomic Number: **71**

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# LUTETIUM

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Lutetium (from the Latin word Lutetia; meaning Paris) was independently discovered in 1907 by French scientist Georges Urbain, Austrian mineralogist Baron Carl Auer von Welsbach, and American chemist Charles James. In each case, Lutetium was discovered as an impurity in the mineral ytterbia. The dispute surrounding the priority of the independent discoveries is documented in two articles in which Urbain and von Welsbach accuse each other of publishing results influenced by the published research of the other. The Commission on Atomic Mass, responsible for the attribution of the names for the new elements, settled the dispute in 1909 by granting priority to Urbain and adopting his names as official ones. However, one obvious problem with this decision was that Urbain was one of the four members of the commission.

Found with almost all other rare-earth metals but never by itself, lutetium is very difficult to separate from other elements. It is one of the rarest and most expensive of the rare earth metals, priced around US\$10,000 per kg. Due to its high cost it has seen limited commercial applications. The relative abundance of the radioactive isotope Lutetium-176 has been used to date the age of meteorites.

*Provided by the element sponsor Phillips Ormonde Fitzpatrick*

## ARTISTS DESCRIPTION

Named after Paris and being one of the most expensive of the rare earth metals. The print consists of a flag of Paris filled with multiple dollar signs.

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